

# Charter revision to clarify Greenfield Health Department

October 30, 2020

4:05 PM  
(8 minutes  
ago)

to 2020charterreviewcommittee, townclerk

Hi Charter Review Committee Members,

I would like the City Charter to be revised so that the GF Health Department would actually exist, as a creation of the Charter. Right now, while the Charter creates all of the other City Departments, it is completely silent on the Health Department. It appears that the Health Department is a fiction, apparently created at some time in the past and continuing by tradition without any anchor in the Charter.

I feel strongly that the BOH has exceptional powers and should not be messed with. The previous administration's treatment of the BOH and Health Department was appalling and not in accordance with the Charter which gives the Mayor no power over the BOH or the Health Department. The previous Mayor hired the Health Director, but that was not in accordance with the Charter or with Mass General Law Ch. 111, sec 30.

I ask that the Charter Review Committee consult with some knowledgeable professionals in regard to the wording for the Charter, such as myself and/or Attorney Cheryl Sbarra from the Mass Association of Health Boards (MAHB). There clearly needs to be a firewall created within the Charter so that the Mayor can not exert undue political influence over the BOH or the Health Department, esp. the Health Director. The Health Director must be hired and fired by the BOH, and report only to the BOH, and certainly not to the Mayor. Public Health is too important for it to be used as a political football, as it has in the past in Greenfield. We should never again be the laughing stock of the Commonwealth when it comes to public health. I think that the current pandemic has reinforced the critical role of public health, and the importance of a highly functioning, professional Health Department, headed by a fully-credentialed, qualified and competent Health Director. This should be considered one of the most essential positions in City government.

Thank you for your time and effort in this regard.

Sincerely,